Met Office

NEWS

Dry for many but turning unsettled at the weekend

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A period of high pressure is bringing a drier spell of weather for much of the UK, but further spells of strong winds and rain are likely at the weekend.

Following record September rainfall for some counties in England, October's weather is starting on a drier note, albeit with some isolated showers in parts of England on Wednesday.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist Paul Gundersen explained the shift in the current weather. He said: "High pressure, which is currently centred to the north of the UK, will continue to exert its influence in the coming days. This brings a more settled period of weather, with sunny spells across Scotland and Northern Ireland extending southwards across England and Wales on Thursday.

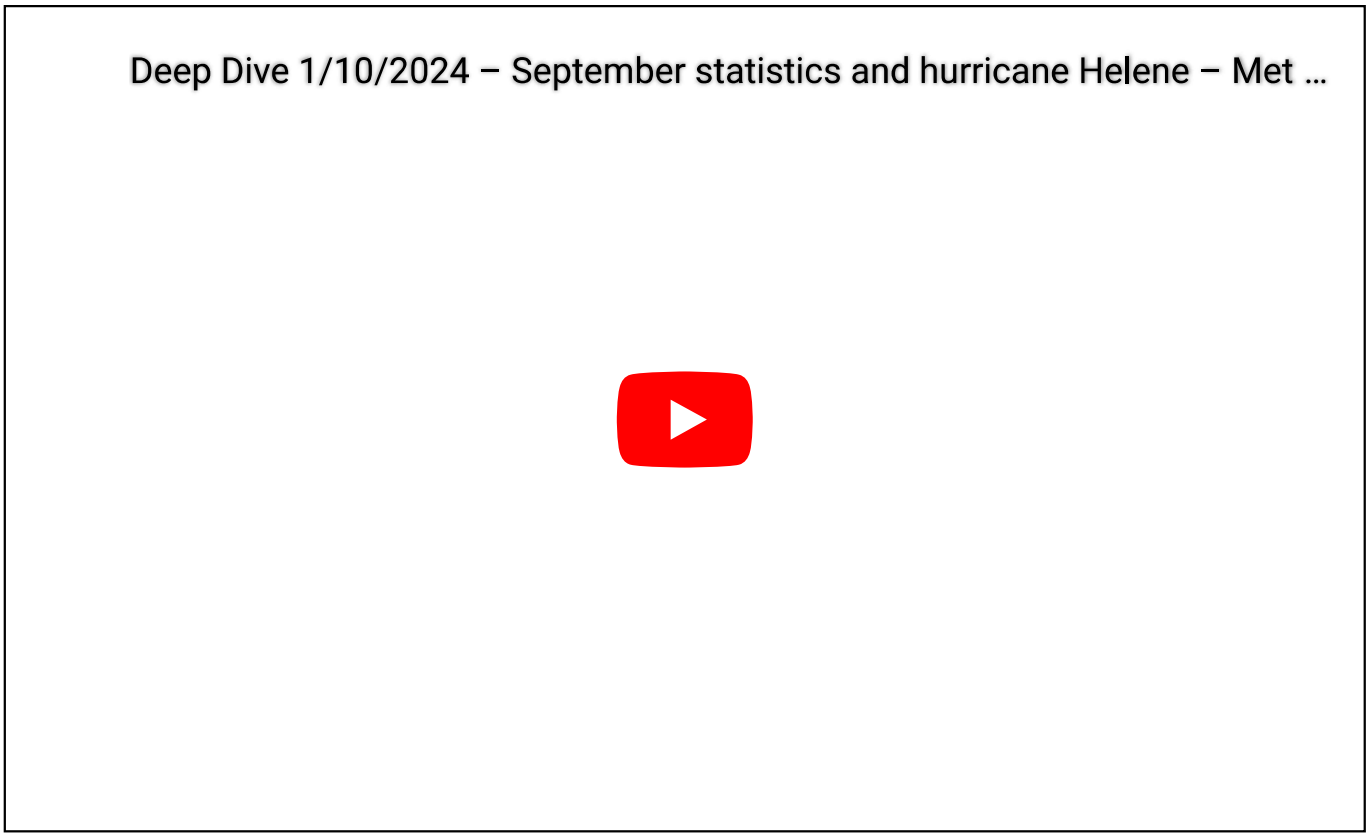
"This ridge of high pressure will remain in the vicinity of the UK in the latter half of the working week, resulting in dry and settled weather for many, though with some cool nights and the chance of some early morning mist and fog for some."

Turning wetter through the weekend

The weather will turn wetter through the weekend, with showers initially reaching Northern Ireland and western parts of Scotland on Friday.

Met Office Deputy Chief Meteorologist Tony Wisson said: "After a drier interlude, the weather will gradually get wetter and windier through the weekend, as high pressure drifts away to the east and is slowly replaced with low pressure, bringing increasing amounts of wind and rain.

"This transition will initially affect western parts of UK, starting in northwestern areas on Friday but then more widely in western areas later on Saturday. These fronts will shift eastwards through the weekend, resulting in rain reaching most areas of the UK by Sunday. The highest rainfall totals through the weekend are most likely in the west and southwest, and generally lower further east."



Detail to be determined next week

An unsettled start to next week is most likely, with low pressure continuing to influence the outlook. By the second half of next week, Hurricane Kirk, which is currently in the Atlantic is introducing some uncertainty to the extended range forecast.

Tony Wisson explains the challenges of the current forecast. He said: “Hurricane Kirk is currently in the tropical Atlantic. It is expected to move north into cooler waters, where it will lose a lot of its strength, but maintain its identity as a moderately deep low pressure system.

“There are complex processes involved when a hurricane undergoes what is known as ‘extra tropical transition’. This results in a lot of variability in the forecast, which means that predictability is low at longer lead times. Therefore, confidence in any one scenario is very low.

“There are a few apparent scenarios. One scenario suggests that this low pressure system could come close to, or even cross, the UK by Wednesday or Thursday next week. This would lead to heavy rain and strong winds in places. Another scenario is for the low pressure system to stay further west in the mid-Atlantic, keeping much of the associated rain and wind away from the UK. Other possibilities are also apparent, but we need to wait until we have more information, to determine which scenario will win out.”

If the system were to cross the UK, it would retain its name from the Atlantic and would be referred to as ‘ex-Hurricane Kirk’ as it would have lost its hurricane strength by the time it reaches the UK.

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